Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1.   (Currently Amended) A method for approving a security change for a file security system that secures electronic files, comprising:

receiving a request for the security change from a requestor, the security change being used for determining access rights comprising permission to retrieve an electronic file from within a secure file store;

identifying a plurality of approvers to approve or disapprove of the requested security change by accessing an approver set in an approval manager module;

notifying the approvers of an approval request for the requested security to change; and

determining whether the requested security change is approved based on responses from the approvers to the approval request; and

~~performing the requested security change when said determining determines that the requested security change has been approved~~.

2.   (Previously Presented)   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said notifying of the approvers is achieved by electronic mail.

3.   (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 2, ~~wherein~~ further comprising:

receiving the responses from the approval group ~~are provided~~ as electronic mail.

4.   (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein determining whether the requested security change is approved includes determining that no one of the plurality of approvers ~~can~~ is authorized to individually approve the requested security change.

5.   (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ identifying the plurality of approvers comprises:

identifying a plurality of approvers that are arranged as a set or group.

6.   (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein ~~the~~ identifying the plurality of approvers comprises:

identifying a plurality of approvers that are arranged in a plurality of sets or groups, ~~and~~ wherein said determining ~~requires approval from~~ whether the requested security change is approved comprises evaluating whether more than one of the plurality of sets or groups ~~in order to determine that~~ have approved the requested security change ~~is approved~~.

7.   (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 6, wherein identifying the plurality of approvers comprises:

identifying a ~~the~~ plurality of sets or groups that are arranged in a hierarchy, and wherein progression to a next level in the hierarchy ~~requires~~ comprises obtaining approval from the set or group associated with a current level.

8.   (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein identifying the plurality of approvers comprises:

identifying a ~~the~~ plurality of ~~approvers are~~ users of the file security system.

9.   (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein identifying the plurality of approvers comprises:

identifying a ~~the~~ plurality of approvers that form a set of approvers, ~~and~~ wherein said determining whether the requested security change is approved comprises evaluating whether ~~determines that the requested security change is approved when~~ a subset of the set of approvers approve the requested security change.

10.   (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein identifying the plurality of approvers comprises:

identifying the ~~plurality of~~ approvers ~~identified by said identifying is dependent~~ based on the requested security change.

11.   (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein identifying the plurality of approvers comprises:

identifying the ~~plurality of~~ approvers ~~identified by said identifying is dependent~~ based on the requestor.

12.   (Previously Presented)   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said notifying operates to substantially simultaneously notify all of the approvers of the approval request for the requested security change.

13.   (Previously Presented)   The method as recited in claim 1, wherein said notifying operates to substantially concurrently notify all of the approvers of the approval request for the requested security change.

14.   (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 1, wherein receiving the request for the security change comprises:

receiving a request for a security change that applies to the electronic files secured by the file security system are electronic documents.

15.   (Currently Amended) A file security system that restricts configured to restrict access to secured electronic documents, comprising:

an access server configured to restrict access to the secured electronic documents; and

an approval manager operatively connected to said access server, wherein said approval manager is and configured to operate a security change approval process to determine whether a requested security change is approved, the security change being used for determining access rights comprising permission to retrieve the secured electronic documents from within a secure file store,

wherein, in operating the security change approval process, the approval manager is configured to notify a plurality of approvers are notified of the requested security change, to ask the approvers and asked to approve or disapprove the requested security change, and to access an approver set to identify the plurality of approvers identified by accessing an approver set in an approval manager.

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16. (Currently Amended) The file security system as recited in claim 15, ~~wherein said file security system has one or more system administrators, and~~ wherein said approval manager is configured to operate ~~operates~~ the security change approval process without any interaction from ~~the one or more~~ a system administrator ~~administrators~~.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently Amended) The file security system as recited in claim 15, wherein the approval manager is configured to notify the ~~plurality of~~ approvers of the requested security change ~~are notified by notification~~ by electronic mail messages.

19. (Currently Amended) The file security system as recited in claim 18, wherein the approval manager is configured to enable the ~~plurality of~~ approvers to approve or disapprove the requested security change using reply electronic mail messages.

20. (Currently Amended) The file security system as recited in claim 19, wherein the approval manager is configured to enable the approvers to reply to the requested security change by electronic mail messages that include a digital signature of the associated approver to verify authenticity.

21. (Currently Amended) The file security system as recited in claim 15, wherein <u>the approval manager is configured to specify that</u> no one of the approvers ~~can~~ <u>is permitted to</u> individually approve the requested security change.

22. (Currently Amended) The file security system as recited in claim 15, wherein the <u>approval manager is configured to arrange the</u> ~~plurality of~~ approvers ~~are arranged~~ as a set or group.

23. (Currently Amended) The file security system as recited in claim 15, wherein the <u>approval manager is configured to arrange the</u> ~~plurality of~~ approvers ~~are arranged~~ into a plurality of sets or groups, and

wherein said approval manager <u>is configured to obtain</u> ~~requires~~ approval from more than one of the plurality of sets or groups in order to determine that the requested security change is approved.

24. (Currently Amended) The file security system as recited in claim ~~15~~ <u>23,</u> wherein the <u>approval manager is configured to arrange the</u> plurality of sets or groups ~~are arranged~~ <u>of approvers</u> in a hierarchy, and wherein <u>the approval manager is configured to allow</u> progression <u>of at least one of the approvers</u> to a next level in the hierarchy <u>in response to</u> ~~requires~~ approval <u>of the at least one approver</u> from the set or group <u>of approvers</u> associated with a current level.

25. (Previously Presented) The file security system as recited in claim 15, wherein the approvers are users of the file security system.

26.   (Currently Amended) The file security system as recited in claim 15, wherein the plurality of approvers form a set of approvers, and

-       wherein said approval manager is configured to determine ~~determines~~ that the requested security change is approved in response to ~~when~~ a subset of the set of approvers ~~approve~~ approving the requested security change.

27.   (Currently Amended) The file security system as recited in claim 15, wherein said approval manager is configured to identify ~~identifies~~ the plurality of approvers dependent on the requested security change.

28.   (Currently Amended) The file security system as recited in claim 15, wherein said approval manager is configured to identify ~~identifies~~ the plurality of approvers dependent on the requestor.

29.   (Currently Amended) The file security system as recited in claim 15, ~~wherein said file security system further comprises~~ further comprising:

a key store operatively connected to said access server, ~~said key store~~ and configured to store ~~stores~~ cryptographic keys used to gain access to the secured electronic documents.

30.   (Currently Amended) ~~A tangible data storage device including at least computer program code~~ An article of manufacture including a computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions, execution of which, by

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a computing device, causes the computing device to perform operations for approving a security change for a file security system that secures electronic files, the operations comprising:

~~computer program code for~~ notifying a plurality of approvers of an approval request for the requested security change, the plurality of approvers identified by accessing an approver set in an approval manager module; and

~~computer program code for~~ determining whether the requested security change is approved based on responses from the approvers to the approval request; ~~and~~

~~computer program code for performing the requested security change when said determining determines that the requested security change has been approved~~, the security change being used for determining access rights comprising permission to retrieve an electronic file from within a secure file store.

31.   (Currently Amended) The ~~data storage device~~ article of manufacture as recited in claim 30, wherein said notifying of the approvers is achieved by electronic mail.

32.   (Currently Amended) The ~~data storage device~~ article of manufacture as recited in claim 31, wherein the responses from the approval group are electronic mail.

33.   (Currently Amended) The ~~data storage device~~ article of manufacture as recited in claim 30, wherein no one of the plurality of approvers can individually approve the requested security change.

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34.   (Currently Amended) A method for approving a security change for a file security system that secures an electronic file, comprising:

receiving a security change request from a requestor, the security change being used for determining access rights comprising permission to retrieve the electronic file from within a secure file store;

determining whether the requestor is authorized to perform the requested security change;

receiving an approval request from the requestor, if the requestor is not authorized to perform the requested security change;

based on the receipt of the approval request, performing the steps of at least the following:

identifying one or more approvers to approve or disapprove of the requested security change;

notifying the one or more approvers of an approval request for the requested security to change; and

determining whether the requested security change is approved based on responses from the one or more approvers to the approval request; and

performing the requested security change when the first determining step determines that the requestor is authorized to perform the requested security change, or when the second determining step determines that the requested security change has been approved.

35.   (Currently Amended) A file security system that restricts configured to restrict access to a secured electronic document, comprising:

an access server configured to restrict access to the secured electronic document; and

an approval manager module operatively connected to said access server, wherein said approval manager module is configured to determine whether a security change is authorized, the security change being used for determining ~~access rights comprising~~ permission to retrieve the secured electronic document from within a secure file store, and~~, if not, operates~~ wherein the approval manager module is configured to operate, in response to a determination that the security change is not authorized, a security change approval process upon receipt of an approval request to determine whether ~~a requested~~ the security change is approved.

36.   (Currently Amended) ~~A tangible data storage device including at least computer program code~~ An article of manufacture including a computer-readable storage medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions, execution of which, by a computing device, causes the computing device to perform operations for approving a security change for a file security system that secures an electronic file, the operations comprising:

~~computer program code for~~ determining whether the requested security change is authorized, the security change being used for determining access rights ~~to~~ comprising permission to retrieve the electronic file from within a secure file store;

~~computer program code for~~ notifying one or more approvers of an approval request for the requested security change~~, if~~ in response to determining that the requested security change is not authorized, and in response to receiving the ~~an~~ approval request ~~is received~~; and

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~~computer program code for~~ determining whether the requested security change is approved based on responses from the one or more approvers to the approval request~~;~~ ~~and~~

~~computer program code for performing the requested security change when said first determining determines that the requested security change is authorized or said second determining determines that the requested security change has been approved.~~

37.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein <u>receiving the</u> <u>request for the security change comprises:</u>

<u>receiving a request that relates to a</u> ~~the~~ secure file store <u>that</u> is located at the file security system.

38.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein <u>receiving the</u> <u>request for the security change comprises:</u>

<u>receiving a request that relates to a</u> ~~the~~ secure file store <u>that</u> is located at the requestor.

39.   (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining, for at least one response received from the approvers, whether it is possible for a quorum of the approvers to approve the requested security change.

40.   (New) The file security system of claim 15, wherein the approval manager is further configured to determine, for at least one response received from the

approvers, whether it is possible for a quorum of the approvers to approve the requested security change.

41.   (New) The article of manufacture of claim 30, the operations further comprising:

determining, for at least one response received from the approvers, whether it is possible for a quorum of the approvers to approve the requested security change.

42.   (New) The method of claim 34, further comprising:

determining, for at least one response received from the approvers, whether it is possible for a quorum of the one or more approvers to approve the requested security change.

43.   (New) The file security system of claim 35, wherein the approval manager is further configured to determine, for at least one response received from the approvers, whether it is possible for a quorum of approvers identified by the security change approval process to approve the requested security change.

44.   (New) The article of manufacture of claim 36, the operations further comprising:

determining, for at least one response received from the approvers, whether it is possible for a quorum of the approvers to approve the requested security change.

45.   (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

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performing the requested security change in response to determining that the requested security change has been approved.

46.   (New) The article of manufacture as recited in claim 30, the operations further comprising:

performing the requested security change when said determining determines that the requested security change has been approved.

47.   (New) The method of claim 34, further comprising:

performing the requested security change in response to determining that the requestor is authorized to perform the requested security change, or in response to determining that the requested security change has been approved.

48.   (New) The article of manufacture of claim 36, the operations further comprising:

performing the requested security change in response to determining that the requested security change is authorized, or in response to determining that the requested security change has been approved